

## Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 USIA-06

SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-03 FEA-01 PA-01

PRS-01 /091 R

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APPROVED BY OES/APT/BMP:ARICHMOND  
S/P:WGATHWRIGHT  
OES/APT:OGANLEY(INFO)  
INT/USGS:CDMASTERS(SUBS)  
EA/ANP:HNELSON

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R 100115Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 161749

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, TGEN, NZ, XV

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL'S ARTICLE ON ANTARCTIC  
MINERAL RESOURCES

REF: WELLINGTON 1879

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE ESTIMATES OF POTENTIAL  
OFFSHORE MINERAL RESOURCES OF WEST ANTARCTICA CARRIED BY  
THE WELLINGTON WEEKLY "TRANS TASMAN" AND REPORTED REFTEL,  
I.E. 45 BILLION BARRELS OF OIL AND 115 TRILLION CUBIC FEET  
OF NATURAL GAS, WERE THE PRODUCT OF AN OVERALL USGS SURVEY  
OF ANTARCTIC MINERAL RESOURCES UNDERTAKEN IN 1973. WHILE  
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THE FIGURES WERE NOT RELEASED BY USGS, THE GEOLOGICAL  
INFORMATION ON WHICH THEY WERE BASED WAS PUBLISHED IN USGS  
CIRCULAR 705 IN NOVEMBER 1974. THE ESTIMATES, HOWEVER,  
HAVE BEEN PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE FOR SOME TIME, HAVING BEEN

REPORTED IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ON FEBRUARY 21, 1974, MORE WIDELY THROUGH UPI ON FEBRUARY 28, 1975, AND IN "SCIENCE" MAGAZINE OF MARCH 7, 1975.

2. THE WASHINGTON POST, ON MARCH 12, 1975, CARRIED A LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM THE CHIEF, OFFICE OF ENERGY RESOURCES OF USGS, WHICH PLACED THE FIGURE FOR POTENTIAL ANTARCTIC OIL RESOURCES IN PERSPECTIVE. HE NOTED THAT THE USGS ESTIMATE WAS FOR POSSIBLE IN-PLACE OIL, WHICH NORMALLY

EXCEEDS THE RECOVERABLE QUANTITY BY TWO-THIRDS. THUS, THE POTENTIALLY RECOVERABLE ANTARCTIC OIL WOULD BE 15 BILLION BARRELS. FOR COMPARISON, 1974 ESTIMATES BY USGS OF RECOVERABLE OIL OFF THE US ATLANTIC SHORE AND OFFSHORE ALASKA WERE 10-20 AND 30-60 BILLION BARRELS, RESPECTIVELY. THE USGS SPOKESMAN INDICATED THAT AS REGARDS ANTARCTICA, NEW DATA, WERE IT AVAILABLE, COULD CHANGE THE ESTIMATE EITHER UP OR DOWN.

3. THE LATTER WAS AN ALLUSION TO THE FACT THAT DATA ON WHICH THE ESTIMATES HAVE BEEN BASED ARE VERY LIMITED, MAKING THE ESTIMATES THEMSELVES HIGHLY SPECULATIVE. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON, IN PART, THAT THE USGS REFRAINED FROM INCLUDING THE ESTIMATES IN ITS CIRCULAR 705. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. THE EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON THE UNCLASSIFIED PORTION OF THIS MESSAGE IN RESPONDING TO QUERIES FROM PRESS OR GOVERNMENT. AS FOREGOING INDICATES, THE SOURCE OF THE ESTIMATES QUOTED WAS A USGS SURVEY, NOT A NSC STUDY. A NSC STUDY WAS MADE TO CLARIFY ISSUES PRIOR TO THE RECENT ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING IN OSLO. THE USGS SURVEY WAS DRAWN ON FOR BACKGROUND AND SOURCE MATERIAL WHICH WAS INCLUDED IN AND AIDED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NSC STUDY. WE ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO DISSEMINATE THE STUDY. INGERSOLL

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